



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20420

DIVERSITY@WORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EEO, WWW.VA.GOV/DMEE0

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

JULY/AUGUST 2003

Q&A

Working For Women Veterans

Part two of our interview with Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of the Center for Women Veterans. In this issue, she discusses her Office's mission to help women vets understand and access their benefits and entitlements.

Q: What programs have you initiated since becoming Director?

Dr. Trowell-Harris: I've instituted several initiatives at VA that help women veterans better understand their benefits and services, including collaborative educational programs with Federal agencies; aggressive out-

reach in conjunction with the Center for Minority Veterans, VHA, VBA, NCA, VSOs, Inter-Tribal Veterans Associations, and veterans' and women's groups; and an improved Center Web site.

One of our more recent collaborative efforts was working with the Department of Health and Human Services to promote National Women's Health Week by sponsoring a signature event, the May 12th Women's Check-up Day. Thousands of women veteran participants benefited

from this national program. The Center also collaborated with the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention on healthy habits and prevention information for women vets on its Web site.

I have also added to the Center Web site "25 Most Frequently Asked Questions" and disseminated the information by mass media. The Center site provides answers to questions ranging from how to apply for benefits to contacts for starting a business or finding an old military buddy. Women vets can find answers to many of their questions simply by visiting our Web site. We've also included valuable links to the Women Veteran's Health Program site and the Veterans benefits Women's Issues Web page.

In addition, I've given 52 keynote speeches and 42 media interviews, and have participated in veterans' forums, town hall meetings, and yearly site visits to VA medical centers, benefits offices, Indian reservations, and national cemeteries. There are more projects on the horizon. For instance, I'd like to develop a transition toolkit for service members in collaboration with the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. ■

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Bookmarks

- **National Association of Hispanic Nurses**
www.thehispanicnurses.org
- **Institute for Community Inclusion**
www.communityinclusion.com
- **Indian Country**
www.indiancountry.com
- **Black Collegian Online**
www.black-collegian.com
- **Woman Engineer Magazine**
www.eop.com/we.html
- **Jewish War Veterans of the USA.**
www.jwv.org
- **National Congress of Vietnamese Americans**
www.ncvaonline.org

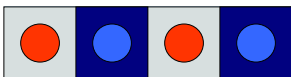
CELEBRATE! Women's Equality Day

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Women's Equality Day on August 26. This year marks the 83rd anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right



to vote. Ratification of the Amendment was the culmination of a 72-year-long movement that began at the world's first women's rights convention in Seneca, New York.

To learn about the Women's Employment Program, contact Lenore Jacobs at lenore.jacobs@mail.va.gov. ■



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- FedNews Online
- FindLaw
- *Government Executive*
- HireDiversity.com
- *Hispanic Business*
- *HR Executive Magazine*
- Indian Country Today
- *Newsweek*
- Journal of Issues in Nursing
- Pew Hispanic Center
- SHRM
- The Access Board
- USAToday.com
- Washingtonpost.com
- *Workforce* magazine
- Workindex.com



For More Info

For special observance theme information and diversity-related events, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

Summer Enrichment Program

VHA's Diversity Advisory Board is collaborating again this year with the American Hospital Association's Institute for Diversity in Health Management to place minority college students in VA medical centers for the summer. Eleven students interested in health care careers are participating in the following medical centers: Saginaw, Albany, Augusta, Richmond, New Orleans, and St. Louis. The following systems are also participating: VA Central Alabama Health Care System, VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System, VA Chicago Health Care System, VA Maryland Health Care System.

► **More info:** www.va.gov/diversity

Calling All HBCU Grads!

DM&EEO would like to recognize VA employees who are graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities during HBCU Week, which will be celebrated September 14–20. If you're an HBCU grad, contact Wanda Jones, Black Special Emphasis Program Manager, at wanda.jones@mail.va.gov by COB July 25th. Include your name, title, organization, years with VA, and HBCU.

Diversity Awards Program

Nominations are now being accepted for the VHA Diversity Awards Program.

The program recognizes VHA facilities, VISNs, and VHA Central Office Program offices that have advanced diversity in the workplace and provided a positive role model for other facilities through educational projects, programs, or activities that demonstrate support for diversity and empowers employees or teams.

Application packages are due no later than September 5, 2003. The award winner will receive a Diversity Trophy; Honorable Mentions will receive framed certificates. For complete information, contact Dr. Dorothy J. Anderson at (601) 680-6841.

Welcome New Staff at VBA

Join us in welcoming these new EEO staff members at VBA:

- Johnny Logan, EEO Program Analyst
- Jomoya Mobutu, EEO Specialist
- Janice Mackey, EEO Specialist.

Mr. Logan was formerly with VBA Central Office. Mr. Mobutu joined VA from the IRS. Ms. Mackey was previously employed by the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation.

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

Hispanic America USA

www.getnet.com/~1stbooks

Content: The Hispanic America USA site offers a patriotic look at the many contributions of Hispanic Americans to the Nation. Included are snapshots of military heroes, world explorers, and civil rights activists.

Must-see feature: The Hero Street link details the historical significance of a neighborhood block in Silvis, Illinois,

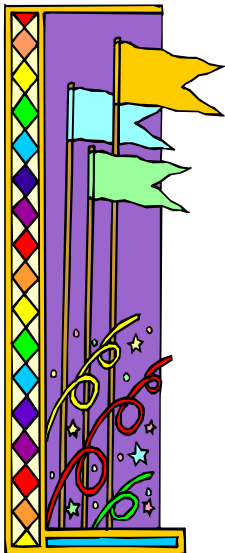
that contributed more than its share of military members during World War II and the Korean War.

Contact info: E-mail contact information is provided via the Credits link.

Accessibility: There's no accessibility help for persons with disabilities, but the site is available in Spanish and English.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS

10th Annual VHA Native American Conference



This is the tenth year that VHA's Native American Advisory Council has hosted an annual conference to provide training on American Indian issues, including employment and health care.

The September 16-20 event will be held in Waltham, Massachusetts, at the Westin Waltham-Boston. The keynote speaker for the training conference will be Rear Admiral Michael J. Trujillo, MD, MPH, MS, a Laguna Pueblo Indian and former eight-year director of the Indian Health Service. He will speak on Indian health issues.

The VHA Native American Conference will host a joint VHA/Indian Health Service panel that will address the recent memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by VA and the Department of Health and Human Services. The panel will encourage attendee questions regarding the MOU, which represents an opportunity for better health care access for American Indians. Following the five-day conference, there will be an American Indian Pow Wow on the Bedford VA Medical Center grounds.

For more information on the conference, including registration and travel information, contact Bruce Kafer via e-mail at Bruce.Kafer@med.va.gov or via phone at (440) 526-3030, extension 7262. Mr. Kafer is an Oglala Sioux Tribal member who is employed by VA as a registered nurse. He also serves on the VHA Native American Advisory Council. ■

INSIDE STORY

Leadership VA 2004 Invites Diversity

The application period for Leadership VA (LVA) is now open. In keeping with the Department's strong commitment to equal employment opportunity, qualified minority, female, and disabled employees are encouraged to apply.

VA Notice 03-1, dated June 23, 2003, provides information for the application process for the LVA 2004 program. Applicants are requested to submit applications to their respective VACO-based sponsoring offices as listed in VA Notice 03-1 (not to the LVA office) by the close of business on October 8, 2003.

VA Notice 03-1 defines LVA eligibility information for VA employees. It reads, in part, that eligibles include "...employees who occupy non-temporary, full-time positions at or above grade GS-13 and equivalent Title 38 levels (includes Veterans Canteen Service employees)." Title 38

equivalency to GS-13 for purposes of qualifying for LVA are defined by VA occupation as: Nurse - Grade IV; Physician, Dentist, Podiatrist, or Optometrist - Intermediate; and Physician Assistant - Chief.



LVA applicants should be high achievers who have demonstrated leadership, success, and career progression. They should also be active contributors to their community. In light of VA's significant investment in the LVA program, selected participants are encouraged to remain with VA for five years after graduation.

Electronic copies of VA Notice 03-1 and the LVA 2004 application form VAF 5-9987 are available on the LVA intranet site at http://vaww.va.gov/valu_lrn/page.cfm?pg=11 and the Leadership VA Alumni Association (LVAAA) site at <http://vaww.lvaaa.va.gov/>. ■

Diversity@Work

Newsletter published bimonthly by the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, send an e-mail request to dmeeo@mail.va.gov.

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COMING SOON

- ▶ More Q&A with Dr. Trowell-Harris
- ▶ AEP Focus on National Cemetery Administration
- ▶ Web Site Spotlight
- ▶ More news, tools, and views!

DM&EEO ONLINE

The mission of the Office of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of new online tools that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ VA's 5-Year Diversity Goals
- ▶ Diversity News lineup
- ▶ Women's Equality Day resources

Bookmark our site; we're here to serve you!



2003 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

Independence Day
July 4

National Veterans Wheelchair Games
July 5-9
Long Beach, CA
www.pva.org

Annual NCAAP Convention
July 12-17
Miami Beach, FL
www.naACP.org

AMVETS National Convention
August 2-9
Orlando, FL
www.amvets.org

Veterans Golden Age Games
August 7-12
Bangor, ME
www.va.gov/opa

Women's Equality Day
August 26
www.va.gov/dmeeo/wed.htm



LOOKING AHEAD:

HBCU Week
September 14-20
www.nafeo.org/hbcu.html

National Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15-October 15
www.hispaniconline.com/hh02/education_celeb_hisp_heritage.html

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
October
www.va.gov/dmeeo/nationaldisabilityemployment.htm

For more events, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.